GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:275
ANSWERED ON:18.02.2009
DEATHS OF BABIES IN GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS
Kharventhan Shri Salarapatty Kuppusamy

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to a recent incident in which five newborn babies kept in incubator died due to fire in a Government-run hospital as reported in 'The Hindu' dated 1 February, 2009;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE >(SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) to (c): As reported by the Government of Punjab, a fire broke out on 31.1.2009 at about 4.30 A.M. in the Nursery of Gynaecology Ward of Rajindra Hospital, Patiala. Five new born babies kept in the Phototherapy Unit died and five babies were rescued. In this connection a judicial inquiry has been instituted.

However, in so far as Central Government hospitals in Delhi namely Safdarjung, Dr. RML Hospital and Lady Harding Medical College & Associated hospitals are concerned, no such incident has happened. Safety measures such as replacement of old equipments especially open care warmers and incubators with new ones are undertaken as and when required. Periodic inspections are carried out by the Engineers of the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) in Nurseries of these hospitals to check short circuits. Smoke detection and fire extinguishers are also kept in working conditions to meet any untoward such incidents.